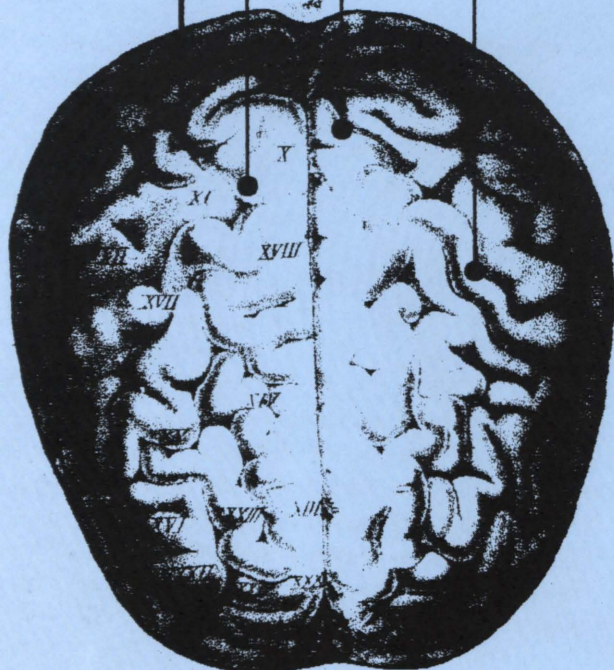
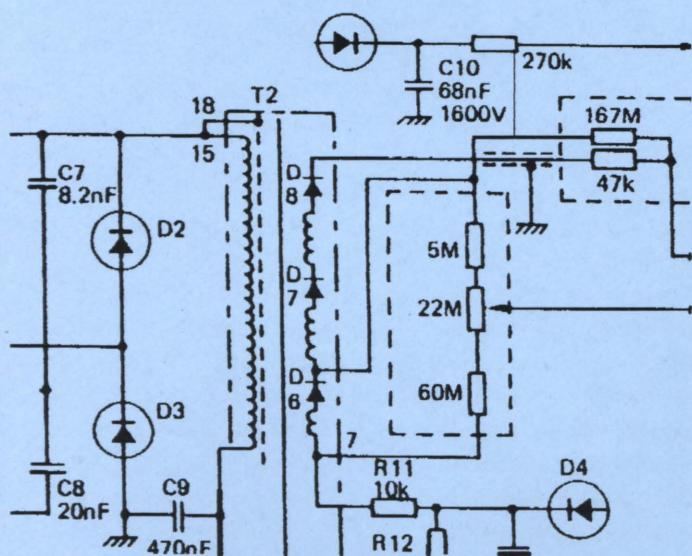


MAGONIA⁵⁸



INTERPRETING CONTEMPORARY VISION AND BELIEF
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Who's plugged into *your* brain?

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The Machine in the ghost.
John Rimmer finds out about poltergeists and time travel

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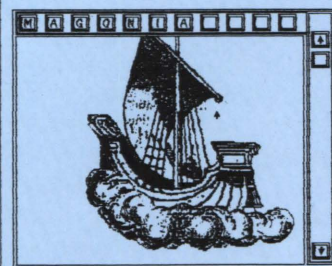
Picking up the pieces.

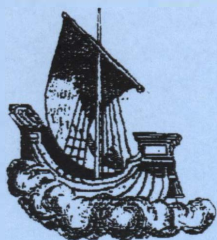
John Harney checks out the crash-retrieval myth



MAGONIA ON LINE

See important announcement on PAGE 5





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DECEMBER 1996

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NORTHERN ECHOES



A recent TV documentary in the *Cutting Edge* series, shown on the 28th September, showed some remarkable scenes illustrative of the strange ideas circulating around the therapeutic community. The boundaries between what one might call 'conventional' hypnotic regression, and New-Age therapies seemed to be very blurred indeed. We heard one therapist explain that her patient's problems were caused by memories of being an egg trapped in her mother's fallopian tubes (I am not making this up - PR), and another explain that a client's stomach pains were caused by memories of having her stomach ripped open in a past-life.

This would be hilarious if it weren't so dangerous and tragic that these therapists can easily persuade patients that their vague disorders are symptoms of being raped by their parents, who were members of a baby-eating Satanic cult. Just how sinister such developments can be was revealed in the coverage of an organisation called Genesis, run by two impeccably (I nearly wrote 'implacably', a very significant Freudian slip - PR) respectable, matronly ladies. Genesis seemed to specialise in breaking up families and 'disengaging' their patrons from

inconvenient parents, spouses, children, etc., in favour of the 'true community' of the cult - oops, I'm sorry, 'therapeutic group'. Like all such groups, members were encouraged to see the external world and wholly contemptible, exploitative and fallen.

The most chilling part of the programme was a young woman describing how she was goaded into beating a cushion, imagining it to be her mother, surrounded by chanting group members, in an image which resembled nothing so much as the 'hate sessions' in George Orwell's *1984*: "I saw my mother's face on the cushion, I didn't really want to hit her, but I kept beating and beating..." One could not hear her speak without images of Bosnia and Rwanda coming to mind, and feeling something of the genesis of all pogroms.

This sombre line of thought is pushed on by a report in *The Observer* of 6th October, on the latest incarnation of the Satanic legend, in Kenya. There traditional witchcraft techniques and the new American import merge into rumours of children being kidnapped for sacrifice. This has led to an official inquiry, which has been completed but not yet

reported. Hints are out, however, that 'devil worshippers' abound and of 'cannibalism, human sacrifice, rape of children and incantations in unintelligible languages'. The Satanists can be recognised by insignia containing the number 666, and an obsession with sex, particularly homosexuality and lesbianism.

In echoes of the British Satanic abuse scare, there are allegations that the Satanists include members of the élite, who "entice people into it with money and have the Mercedes to kidnap people". Behind it all are "those who have jumped at political and economic freedoms", i.e., who are the political opponents of the dictator Arap Moi. High on that list is, of course, the well-known anthropologist, evolutionist and conservationist Richard Leakey - just the sort of person that the American radical right and their puppets love to hate. Perhaps, as in the Cold War, the shooting phase of America's *kulturkampf* will be fought out in the Third World.

And if the war does come home there will be plenty of those therapists and counsellors encouraging us to beat to death the enemies in our own homes.



MAGONIA Readers' Group meetings take place on the first Sunday of each month at the Railway pub, Putney, from 7.00 pm onwards. The Railway is on the corner of Putney High Street and Upper Richmond Road, directly opposite Putney BR station. Just turn up and look for the table with copies of Magonia scattered around, for an evening of entertaining conversation. The Railway is a Wetherspoon's pub with an excellent range of food and drink - and *no music*.

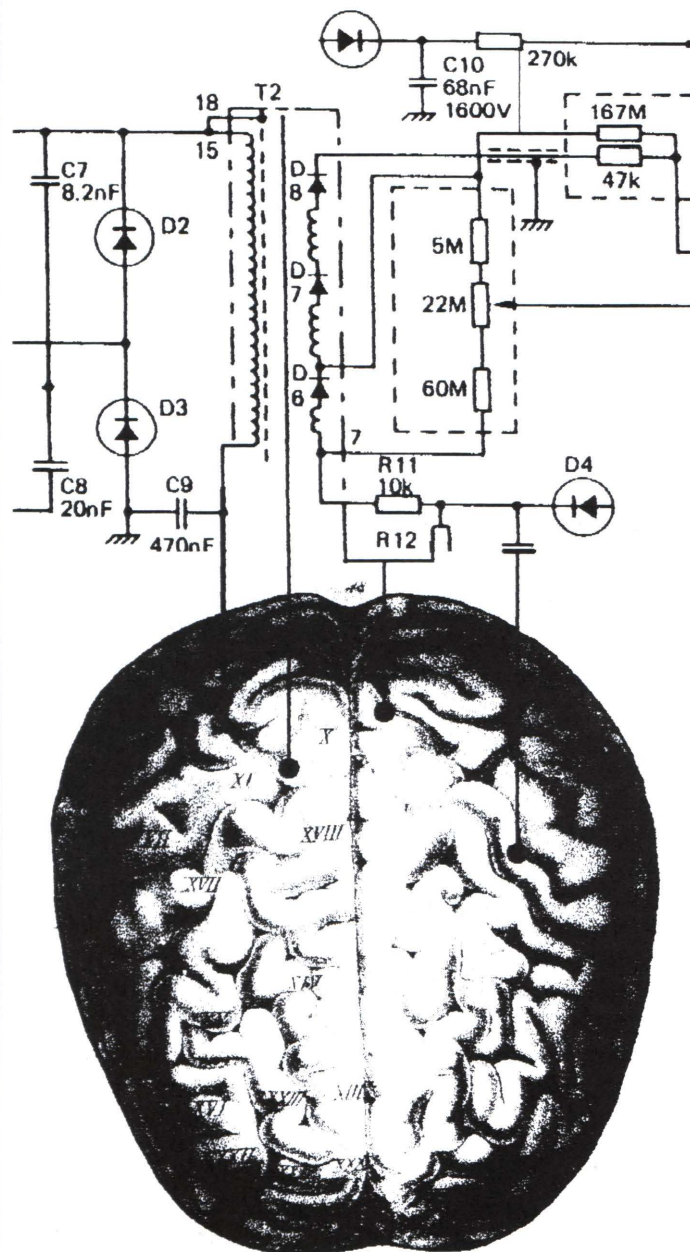
Tense nervous headache?
Always run down and irritable? Not feeling yourself? Well maybe that's because you're not yourself, rather, you are being controlled from somewhere else by someone else.

Last year *Tomorrow's World* featured a man whose Parkinson's disease symptoms could be controlled by pressing a switch on a handset which in turn operated a tiny device implanted into his brain. No more shaking, no more tears. This is the friendly, caring side of the neural implant, but many people believe that dark forces are at work, trying to take over the minds of their targeted subjects via tiny objects inserted into various parts of the body. These sinister controllers take many forms; some say that it's the CIA or other shadowy intelligence outfits; others that it's the secret world government, plotting for world domination; others still that it's those malicious aliens, the Greys, who use implants as tracking devices so that they can abduct their hapless victims any time, any place and operate on them on board their spacecraft. Sometimes the Greys are working for the government, sometimes

A growing number of writers are claiming that sinister government agents are using covert technology to control our thoughts and actions.

Mark Pilkington takes a look at the background to these beliefs

WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?



the government is working for the Greys, and sometimes the government is working as the Greys, using remote hypnotic devices to trigger off the abduction fantasy as a disguise for what's really going on. Ex-soldier Timothy McVeigh, prime suspect in last year's Oklahoma City bombing, told police that he had himself been sporting such an implant after being witness to many UFO encounters on his farm. One might expect this to be an elaborate attempt to plead insanity, but knowing the current climate in much of America, I wouldn't be so sure.

But it's not just 'over there'. In a letter sent to John Major in 1992, Lennart Lindqvist, international secretary for a group dedicated to uncovering illicit mind control operations, wrote: '... we have become aware of several victims in Great Britain; reports received from exploited individuals refer to mental hospitals, police authorities and prisons as among the state institutions involved in the implantation of ... electrodes of radio-transmitting crystals in people'. He goes on to quote a letter from a Mr N'Tumba, a British victim: 'Concerning the brain transmitter in my head, it has been performing without my knowledge or consent ... What's very outrageous is that I am sharing all my visions, thoughts, images, hearing etc. with people around me as the security services are engaging in a large scale propaganda drive to smear my character, background, behaviour, emotions and motives ... I have no privacy at all ...' (1) Lindqvist states that X-rays of Mr N'Tumba's brain, analysed by a Dr Lindstrom, noted for his pioneering use of ultrasonics in neurosurgery, clearly show an object implanted into his left nostril as well as other blocking the oxygen flow to his brain.

You might be excused for dismissing Mr N'Tumba as a paranoid schizophrenic were it not for the fact that ordinary, respected people, all across America in all walks of life, are reporting similar things. These are the Abductees, and according to some researchers there are up to two million of them. One of these researchers, Dr David Jacobs, is an associate professor of history at Temple

University in Philadelphia; he writes: 'Towards the end of the examination, the aliens either implant a small, round seemingly metallic object in the abductee's ear, nose, or sinus cavity, or remove such an object. The object is ... small, it usually is smooth, or has small spikes sticking out of it, or has holes in it'. (2) Jacobs notes that implants are left near the brain; subjects often wake up with ear or nose bleeds after an abduction and sometimes small objects will drop out when a person blows their nose. Another researcher is Pulitzer prize winner and professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, John Mack MD. He says: 'I have myself studied a $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thin, wiry object that was given to me by one of my clients ... Elemental analyses and electronic microscopic photography revealed an interestingly twisted fibre consisting of carbon, silicon, oxygen, no nitrogen and traces of other elements. A nuclear biologist colleague said the specimen was not a naturally occurring biological object, but could be a manufactured fibre of some sort'. (3) A suspected implant that had embarrassed its subject since his teenage years, was removed from a man's penis in 1994 and examined by Massachusetts Institute of Technology physicist David Pritchard. His conclusion was that the object appeared to be a collection of calcified cotton fibres, presumably gained from wearing starchy, tight underpants, that had somehow become embedded in the head of the penis. Mack, however, is not concerned: '... it would not be difficult for the aliens, in light of all the other seemingly miraculous things of which they appear capable, to adapt a small object to the human body by forming it along the lines of the body's own chemistry. If that were the case, the analysis would yield nothing unusual'.

More recently, a November 1995 newspaper article mentions a California surgeon who operated, on video, on two abductees, and removed implants from both of them. One came from the big toe of a woman, the other from the back of a man's hand; both objects were noticed during X-rays for other minor injuries. But if the aliens put their implants into their victims'

The object appeared to be a collection of calcified cotton fibres, presumably gained from wearing starchy, tight underpants, that had somehow become embedded in the head of the penis.

brains, who is responsible for these ones? The objects were seed-sized, encased in a thick dark membrane and couldn't be cut with a scalpel; one was T-shaped. Once cut open they were found to contain tiny black pieces of a highly magnetic metal. There was no scarring or inflammation of the skin around the objects in either patient. (4) Another mystery object was removed from an abductee in Ontario, Canada in January 1995; it came from 'in back of her left ear'. (5) was 1 mm long and dark in colour. Analysed under an electron microscope it was found to contain primarily aluminium, titanium and silicon; which a technician with Panasonic Canada stated, 'would be a transducer and can be used to transmit signals'. (6) Author and abductee Whitley Strieber has recently set up an implant removal programme with the aid of an anonymous, wealthy benefactor, so we can hope for a lot more implant information in the future.

The dark history of US, UK and USSR experiments into mind control and brain washing since the early 50s is well known and there are many books available on the subject. (7) In America projects such as Artichoke, Bluebird, Pandora, Mkdelta, Mksearch and Mkultra explored the erasure of memory, hypnotic resistance to torture, truth serums, post-hypnotic suggestion, rapid induction of hypnosis, electronic stimulation of the brain, non-ionising radiation, microwave induction of intracerebral 'voices', and a host of even more disturbing technologies. Perhaps the best known of these is Mkultra; by giving LSD to unwitting subjects including soldiers, students and mental patients, the CIA hoped to utilise its properties as a truth serum and in mind control. Acid guru Timothy Leary is quoted as saying: 'The entire LSD movement itself was sponsored originally by the CIA, to whom I give great credit. I would not be here today if it had not been for ... the CIA psychologists'. (8) All such research was supposed to have stopped in the early 1970s, but various sources close to the CIA, including Victor Marchetti who spent 14 years in its service, have stated that

the work was just pushed even further underground and frequently surfaces in contemporary torture techniques abroad.

Experimentation with Electronic Stimulation of the Brain (ESB) via implants was a central part of this series of programmes. Yale psychologist Jose Delgado developed a device in the early 1960s known as a 'stimoveiver'. He allegedly demonstrated this by implanting it into a bull's brain and goading it electronically whilst standing in the ring. The bull charged him but stopped suddenly moments from impact; Delgado had caused it to do so via a remote control! Bryan Robinson, of the Yerkes primate laboratory, has conducted remote ESB research on simians, causing mothers to ignore their offspring, despite the babies' cries and turning submission into dominance, and vice-versa. Dr Robert Heath, a neurosurgeon at Tulane University, claimed a world record after implanting 125 electrodes into a subject's body and brain, and subsequently spent hours stimulating the man's pleasure centres. Both scientists concluded that ESB could control memory, impulses, feelings, invoke hallucinations, fear and pleasure. Heath, and many of his colleagues, considered ESB a potential 'cure' for homosexuals and other 'socially troublesome persons'; this could, of course, be you ... Joseph A Meyer, of the National Security Agency, America's most secretive defence group, has proposed implanting electronic tags into all those arrested, for any crime, in order to monitor their behaviour at all times. He uses New York's Harlem district as his model in his proposal.

The implant, then, is no fantasy, but how far have its potential implications been implemented? It has often been reported that the CIA has mastered a technology called RHIC-EDOM. RHIC means Radio Hypnotic Intracerebral Control. EDOM stands for Electronic Dissolution of Memory. Allegedly these techniques can remotely induce hypnotic trance, deliver suggestions to the subject, induce feelings and emotions and erase all memory for both the instruction period and the act which

the subject is asked to perform. They might operate using advanced implant technologies but are such implants even necessary? According to one writer there is an EDOM device currently operational that can be carried by an individual and cause time disorientation in somebody else through any form of physical contact, even a touch. (9) Many shops use messages transmitted at high frequencies above the hearing threshold to combat shoplifting; some report a success rate of up to 80%. A Dr Sharp, a Project Pandora researcher for the US Army, ran experiments whereby the human brain picked up words that were transmitted via microwaves, thus bypassing the ear. Dr James Lin of Wayne State University discusses the possibilities of using such techniques to aid the deaf, but comments: 'The capability of communicating directly with humans by pulsed microwaves is obviously not limited to the field of therapeutic medicine'. (10) In the 1970s science fiction writer Philip K. Dick and mindbender Uri Geller both reported contact with what appeared to be a non-human machine intelligence orbiting the planet Earth; Dick called it VALIS, Geller called it SPECTRA. Were they perhaps subjects in a microwave satellite communication experiment or both just equally insane?

The alien abductees report a number of things that could be induced via such devices and have been reported as elements of neural response programming: buzzing and voices, missing time, inexplicable emotions in inappropriate circumstances (e.g. love for an alien that is raping them), loss of self control, telepathic communication and memories of films projected on to screens. Many report the disturbance of electrical objects in their presence, perhaps a side effect of such implant technologies. Could the whole abduction scenario be a carefully manipulated hypnotic cover for experimentation by government or military intelligence services? Certainly many abductees have reported seeing human military personnel during their experiences (one was actually identified as a human doctor), and others have seen

helicopters suddenly become UFOs and vice-versa. Dr Michael Persinger, well known for his views that the abduction experience is triggered by exposure of the brain's temporal lobes to electromagnetic fields, was once employed by the Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency to remotely induce vomiting in enemy soldiers, which he did successfully. John Mack has also been linked to Mkultra related projects. There is, undeniably, a close relationship between the military and intelligence agencies and the UFO phenomenon, but it seems as far fetched as the idea of the Greys to blame them for everything. Then again, if the aliens are all powerful, as they certainly seem to be, why would they need to use implants at all?

So, confronted with the potential reality of such devices we can only wonder how far their use has actually been taken and, ultimately, who is in control of them. Or, to put it another way, who might be in control of us?

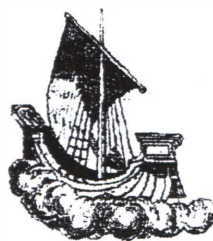
NOTES

- 1. Quoted in 'An open letter to the Swedish Prime Minister from a survivor of electromagnetic terror' by Robert Naesland. It now appears that Mr N'Tumba might actually have been the mysterious Henry Azadehdal: what his motives were for concocting the letter we can only guess. From *Secret and Suppressed*, ed. Jim Keith, 1993.
- 2. David M. Jacobs, *Secret Life*, 1992
- 3. John Mack, *Abduction*, 1994
- 4. *Alexandria Journal*, Virginia, USA, 8 November 1995
- 5. *CUFORN Bulletin*, Vol. 15, No. 1, 1995
- 6. *Ibid.* Antonio Fernandez, quality control technician with Panasonic Division of Matsushita Electric, Canada
- 7. I recommend *In Search of the Manchurian Candidate* by John Marks as a starting point.
- 8. *High Times*, February 1978
- 9. Lincoln Lawrence, *Were We Controlled?*
- 10. James Lin, *Microwave Auditory Effects and Applications*

SOURCES AND FURTHER READING

- Anna Keeler, 'Remote mind control technology', in Jim Keith (ed.), *Secret and Suppressed*, 1993
- Martin Cannon, *The Controllers*
- John Mack, *Abduction*, 1994
- David Jacobs, *Secret Life*, 1992
- John Marks, *In Search of the Manchurian Candidate*, 1975
- Gordon Thomas, *Journey into Madness*, 1989

Mind control forum website: <http://members.gnn.com/livestring/index.htm>



Setting sail for the Cyber-sea.

With Tesla-like ingenuity the editors have found a way to plug their rusty typewriters into the Information Supertramway. So hopefully, by January 1997 those of you who have fallen for the Internet's multiple charms will be able to access Magonia online.

The central idea is to provide an electronic archive for over 25 years of MUFOB/Magonia material, in the shape of articles, letters, reviews, comment, embarrassing photographs of the editors and whatever else can be dredged up from the beer-soaked past of the two magazines. There will also be a forum for news, gossip and correspondence from the heady world of UFO-dom, and the obligatory page of links to other sites of interest.

The site will not be graphics intensive and will be on one of the faster servers in the UK, so you won't have to wait hours to download those glossy but irrelevant photos of shredded Coca Cola cans from Roswell.

The URL for the site will be:
<http://www.netkonect.co.uk/d/magonia>

If you are currently online and would like to be informed as to when the site will be up and running then please send an email message, subject Magonia, to:
markp@dogon.netkonect.co.uk

If you have any queries, comments or other bright ideas, please get in touch. See you in Cyberspace.

Mark Pilkington
Magonia Web Editor

25 YEARS AGO

The December 1971 issue of MUFOB was our biggest number to that date, eighteen foolscap pages of single-spaced typescript – and all of it just one article. This was *The New Ufology - a Critique*, Alan Sharp's definite demolition of John Keel and Jacques Vallée. The fact that both of these figures are still very much around and Alan Sharp has long vacated the UFO scene speaks more of the latter's disillusion with the scene than the validity of the former's theories.

I got into a bit of trouble with Alan over the cover of this issue, where I had put, in an elaborate Victorian typeface, the quotation from J. M. Barrie: 'Whenever a child says "I don't believe in fairies", there's a little fairy somewhere that drops down dead!' He didn't approve, but by the time Alan had finished the landscape must have been littered with tiny bodies.

It is hard to summarise Alan's article as it covers in great detail the many scientific errors and illogical arguments in both Vallée's *Passport to Magonia* and Keel's *Operation Trojan Horse*, which were at that time the two main manifestos of the 'New Ufology'.

Perhaps what is most significant about *A Critique* is that in many ways prefigures the modern sceptical movement. It was the first serious sceptical look at ufological ideas from within ufology, looking critically at some of the core beliefs of the subject, rather than just being a series of attempts to explain individual reports. A professional geologist and astronomer, Alan was also a serious ufologist who brought an incisive, scientifically trained mind to the subject. No-one could accuse him of 'armchair ufology', having spent his time skywatching on Cradle Hill, and haring off in his trusty Austin A40 to investigate UFO reports in the North-West. His article triggered off a number of responses, which I will summarise next issue.

●●●

What lies at the core of the growing number of UFO crash retrieval stories?

John Harney checks out three widely reported cases to see if there is substance behind the stories

UFO Crash Retrievals - a developing myth

Ufology as a separate field of study depends on the hypothesis that some UFO reports are genuine descriptions or instrumental records of objects or phenomena unknown to modern science. It is generally agreed that the vast majority of UFO reports are wrongly interpreted sightings of objects such as aircraft or meteors. For many of the stranger reports, convincing psychological explanations are available.

Many ufologists have always been convinced that a small percentage of UFO reports are sightings of craft from other planets. It is not acceptable to them to say that because most reports can be attributed to more mundane causes, then the remainder can also be, given sufficient information.



Such ufologists have a desperate craving for unequivocal physical evidence which would prove their case. Some of these people are keen on science and technology. They have little time for myths, unless they can be given rational, literal interpretations. They also have little taste for UFO abduction stories. They see the purpose of ufology as the general acknowledgement of the reality of alien spacecraft surveying our planet. They are not interested in giving psychotherapy to people who apparently believe that they are constantly being abducted from their bedrooms through solid walls into enormous glowing craft which are unaccountably invisible to their neighbours. Such things are the stuff of dreams and delusions; their space people may have advanced technology but they are not to be granted any magical powers such as those possessed by the characters in fantasy novels.

Stories of crashed saucers which leave wreckage and occupants, dead or alive, have been around for a long time, in various forms. The American 1897 airship wave is a familiar example. The problem is that all these stories lack credibility, and investigations have revealed that, while some witnesses were undoubtedly sincere but mistaken, most of the stories were simply crude hoaxes.

Then came Roswell. As the story developed it was quickly seen as a boon to the nuts-and-bolts ufologists, tired of vague lights in the sky and accounts of life on other worlds received by telepathy or other occult means. A physical object had crashed, its substance was not of this world, and it did not dissolve into nothingness when picked up. Therefore it must still exist, hidden away on some US Air Force base. The final proof.

This makes it seem simple. Just exert enough political pressure and the sensational truth will eventually be revealed. However, it is not so simple.

Although the Roswell case is undoubtedly based on a real incident involving the recovery of the wreckage of something from a ranch near Corona, New Mexico in July 1947, it received only brief, if widespread, publicity at the time. After the bizarre press release about a

flying disc being recovered caused a worldwide sensation, the cover story designed to damp things down - that it was, after all, only a weather balloon with a radar target attached - was generally accepted (at least by those whose opinions on such things mattered) and the story died. It was mentioned by Frank Edwards in his book *Flying Saucers - Serious Business* (1), but it was apparently not publicly discussed again until the late 1970s, when Jesse A. Marcel, who had been the intelligence officer at the 509th Bomb Group at Roswell in 1947, decided to publicise his version of the affair.

This resulted in a reawakening of interest and investigations by ufologists gradually became more intensive and better organised. Eventually a very detailed story emerged and was published in various books, articles, reports and television documentaries.

This publicity stimulated many ufologists to probe old cases which seemed somewhat similar, but had not been taken very seriously. This process unearthed details which had not appeared in the original reports, such as the alleged recovery of the bodies of aliens, as well as wreckage. Many other, often trivial, details emerged and I hope to demonstrate that crash retrieval stories, as they are now discussed, tend to fall into a pattern, which takes the Roswell accounts as a model.

From the Roswell story we can extract a number of motifs, many of which are not essential to the story, but can be seen to be repeated in accounts of other incidents. It is interesting to note that other crash retrieval stories are compared with Roswell; so far as many ufologists are concerned this is the standard by which they are assessed.

Now crash retrieval stories, as I have said, are remarkable for the absence of accounts of paranormal or visionary experiences which are involved in so many UFO reports. But do they form coherent or consistent narratives with their own internal logic? Do they, when closely scrutinised, make any kind of sense? I don't think so.

Let us look at two other cases as well as Roswell and we shall see that

it would be quite crazy to interpret them as evidence of alien visitors crashing their saucers but perfectly reasonable to see them as part of a developing myth within the framework of UFO reports, beliefs and criticism by sceptics.

Although the Roswell object was almost certainly not a weather balloon, and there are serious doubts about the recent suggestion that it may have been a much larger balloon carrying equipment designed to monitor distant atomic explosions (Project Mogul), it could have been some other secret military device. There wasn't much more to the story until rumours of aliens, dead or alive, being recovered from another crash site began to emerge. According to some reports it was only a few miles away, but the most detailed accounts gave it as being on the Plains of San Augustin, more than 150 miles away. However, some pretty compelling evidence has been presented that this story is untrue. (2)

Various accounts of the recovery of the aliens allege that those still alive offered no resistance to capture, being unarmed and quite helpless, but they were cruelly treated by the military. This is a theme which recurs in other crash retrieval stories.

According to the Roswell reports, a considerable amount of time elapsed before the aliens were captured. This raises an obvious problem of internal logic if we choose to believe such stories. We are apparently supposed to believe that the organisers of such missions to Earth send craft into our atmosphere which use some advanced means of propulsion, but are somewhat less mechanically reliable than our airliners. The aliens, being somewhat backward in the technology of automation, remote control and remote sensing, have to pilot the craft themselves. If they crash, there are no back-up craft to rescue them; they simply have to wait for the inevitable arrival of the military and shipment to some secret base where their bodies are dissected or, if still alive, they are incarcerated indefinitely.

It can be argued that there is much confusion and uncertainty about Roswell because the events happened so long ago. More recent reports

should provide a clearer picture. But do they? Take the incident in North Wales in January 1974, for example. At 8.39 in the evening of 23 January a violent explosion was heard in the area of Bala and Llandrillo, followed by an earth tremor which was strong enough to be recorded at Edinburgh University. Witnesses reported seeing lights around a nearby mountain. It was at first thought that an aircraft had crashed on the mountain, but the Royal Air Force (RAF), which sent a team to search the mountain, later said that there had been no crash and they had been looking for debris from a meteor fall. (3) However, it was said that the area around the mountain was sealed off for several days and that even the police were not allowed there. The media failed to follow up the story and when Jenny Randles attempted to investigate it she found the local people unwilling to discuss it. (4) At this point the story, whilst intriguing and rather puzzling (why would the RAF want to go looking for meteorites?) was hardly a crash retrieval case. Like Roswell, the story died when the media accepted official explanations.

Almost 20 years later, ufologist Margaret Fry moved to North Wales and began to unearth a number of witnesses, one of them being a nurse who said that she had driven to the mountain with her two daughters on that night because she thought that an aircraft had crashed. She claimed to have seen a large, circular object, glowing orange, on the ground, but no evidence of bodies or wreckage. She also claimed that she was stopped by police and military personnel, who ordered her to leave the area. (5)

Perhaps it should be mentioned that Margaret Fry has been interested in UFOs for many years and has made 'countless sightings'. Perhaps it should also be mentioned, as it has been by Jenny Randles, that the brilliant meteor seen crossing North Wales on the night in question was timed at 9.58, more than an hour after the explosion. (7)

Confused? So am I. But there's more. Tony Dodd (one of Britain's most active UFO investigators) has

□1. Edwards, Frank. *Flying Saucers - Serious Business*, New York, Bantam Books, 1966

□2. A good summary of this story and the reasons for disbelieving it are given in: Randle, Kevin D. *A History of UFO Crashes*, New York, Avon Books, 1995, 28-56

□3. Randles, Jenny. *UFO Retrievals*, London, Blandford, 1995, 112-121

□4. A high proportion of the people in that area speak Welsh. I believe that a Welsh-speaking investigator would have been able to obtain more information from them.

□5. Randles, *op. cit.*

□6. Randles, Jenny. 'Britain's Roswell?', *Sightings*, 1, 3 (1966), 10-15

□7. If any readers have any information as to the truth or accuracy of these timings, would they kindly let us know.



□8. Dodd, Tony. 'UFO Crash in North Wales?', *UFO Magazine*, September/October 1996, 34-37 (This is the British *UFO Magazine*, not to be confused with at least two others with the same title.)

□9. Varginha is located at 21° 33'S 45° 26'W.

□10. Birdsall, Graham W. 'Incident at Varginha', *UFO Magazine*, *op. cit.*, 8-13, 57-59, 66

□11. I am grateful to Mark Pilkington for obtaining these reports and to John Rimmer for printing them out for me.

■12. Randle, Kevin D., *op. cit.*

recently published an article covering much the same ground as covered by Jenny Randles. (8) But he goes on to reveal that a witness, described as a retired Army officer, has come forward to claim that alien bodies were retrieved from the scene. This man claimed that he was ordered to drive to Llandderfel (near the area in question), with four other soldiers, where they loaded 'two large oblong boxes' into their vehicle and were ordered to take them directly to the Chemical and Biological Defence Establishment at Porton Down, Wiltshire. When they got there, the boxes were opened in their presence to reveal the bodies of alien beings. Other soldiers had also transported aliens to Porton Down, but these were alive.

The ex-soldier claimed to have arrived in North Wales on 20 January 1974 and the bodies were delivered to Porton Down some time the next day. But, wait a minute. Dodd gives us the time of the explosion - 8.39 p.m. - as well as the year and the month, but for some reason he omits the date. I wonder why? Perhaps it is because of the difficulty of resolving the paradox of the aliens arriving at Porton Down on 21 January, two days before their saucer crashed on 23 January.

Anyway, we have no reason to believe this ridiculous tale. For instance, if soldiers were delivering some secret cargo and it was not considered necessary or desirable to tell them what it was while they were transporting it, is it even conceivable that it would be revealed to them when they had safely delivered it and their task was completed? Of course not. It is a pack of lies, but it is an important part of the crash retrieval myth: crashed saucers usually have aliens in them.

Another point. As one of the principal witnesses claimed to have seen an apparently undamaged saucer on the ground and others have claimed to have seen one take off, there must have been at least two involved. There must also be wreckage and I eagerly await the inevitable yarns about the people who picked up chunks of it only to have it confiscated by military authorities just as they were about to have it analysed. It is inevitable - well, almost inevitable

- because it is one of the more important motifs of the developing myth.

It is all very unsatisfactory. If only we had a crash retrieval which took place recently in a place where there were lots of people around to see what occurred. Then the Truth would surely be revealed. How about a suburb of a large town? Well, it's actually happened, that is if you can believe the reports. In Brazil, arguably the most saucer-infested country on earth.

On 20 January 1996, at about 3.30 p.m. three girls walking home through Jardim Andere, a suburb of Varginha (9) saw a strange creature, humanoid in appearance, with brown skin. It was about 1.6 metres tall, had three humps on its head and large bright red eyes. It was naked and apparently had no genitals, nipples or navel. The girls were terrified and ran to the home of two of them, where they told their mother. The story spread rapidly and when ufologists Vitorio Pacaccini and Ubirajara Franco Rodrigues began to investigate they found that witnesses spoke of there being at least two aliens, both of which were captured by the local fire service, the army, or both together. These beings were allegedly taken to a local hospital, but did not survive and their bodies were later moved elsewhere.

During the previous night there had been a sighting of a submarine-shaped UFO, about the size of a small bus, flying at about 5 metres above the ground and emitting smoke or vapour, at a farm about 10 km from Jardim Andere. The witnesses had been alerted by noises from the farm animals.

The first detailed account of the case which I saw was an article by Graham Birdsall, based on information he had received when he went to a UFO conference in Curitiba, Brazil in June and met Pacaccini and Rodrigues. (10) I have also read many reports and comments which have been published on the Internet. (11) With so many witnesses and such intensive investigation by experienced ufologists one would have expected a coherent story to have emerged by now, nearly a year after the events.

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The reports are a confusing mixture of eyewitness testimony, rumour and speculation. The army, police, fire service and hospital authorities allegedly involved in the capture and removal of the aliens deny everything.

It is said that one of the bodies was taken to the University of Campinas, where an autopsy was carried out by Dr Fortunato Badan Palhares (who is apparently famous for having carried out the autopsy on the Nazi, Mengele). Dr Palhares denies this, of course. According to another report eight aliens were captured. One was dead, two were injured and one later died, and five were uninjured. Another report alleges that the six living aliens were flown from Campinas Airport in a Brazilian air force plane to Sao Paulo. There they were 'marched aboard' (!) a US Air Force transport plane and flown to Albrook Air Force Base in Panama.

The Brazilian ufologists insist that the confusion is caused by a great international cover-up operation but that in the case of Varginha they arrived on the scene too quickly for it to be fully effective as it usually is. Authorities involved are ordered to deny that anything unusual has

happened, and witnesses are silenced by threats or bribes.

For those who want to believe in crash retrievals there are a number of serious logical problems. The most important one is this: if there are only a handful of cases, this would seem highly unlikely to most people, but not impossible. However, if it is thought that UFO crashes are by no means rare, then it would be impossible to conceal the truth for very long. It is also hard to imagine aliens flying around in such unreliable craft. Or do they crash them deliberately?

One way of getting around this problem is to say or imply that there are very few UFO crashes. This is the approach taken by Kevin D. Randle, who devotes a book to listing UFO crash reports, labelling all but a few of them as hoaxes. (12) The alternative is to say that governments are in collusion with the aliens, and that the aliens are operating in such a way as to enable them to continue concealing the truth from the public. However, this does not deal with the problem of the crashes.

All this does not mean that UFO crash retrieval reports are based on nothing at all. Normally there is some



The Varginha 'alien', as depicted on the cover of Brazilian magazine *UFO*. The caption read 'Alien captured alive in Minas Gerais'.

unusual event which somehow sets in motion a process of rumour and speculation. The crashed UFO myth has by now received so much publicity that it is readily available to provide a framework for the elaboration of such reports. Pathological liars and publicity seekers are always available to provide further amazing information. The myth can be broken down into motifs, which can then be modified and reassembled to provide the details of different crash retrieval stories. I here present a tentative list of the usual motifs, in the hope that others will develop it more fully, so that we end up with a model for a typical crash retrieval and thus know what to look for in future reports. (See box)

The crash retrieval report usually seems to develop from some central event, to which the above motifs are added as investigation and discussion get under way. In the Roswell Case this was the finding of wreckage on his ranch by Mac Brazel. In the North Wales case it was the sound of a violent explosion, followed by an earth tremor. In the Varginha case, it was the sighting of something which they took to be 'the devil' which frightened three girls walking home through a suburban street. It is quite likely that there is no connection between these three cases, but the myth took over and the stories were built up from the motifs by a pick-and-mix process.

All of this is not to decry the hard work put into investigations by many ufologists. It is not their investigations that are at fault but their absurd theory of clapped-out saucers full of helpless aliens. ●●●

FOOTNOTE:

In the most recent number of *Northern UFO News* (157, Autumn 1996), Jenny Randles returns to the subject of the 1974 Llandrillo incident. She considers the possibility that the original incident may have been caused by the crash of an RAF plane carrying a nuclear weapon, and the UFO connection was introduced as deliberate 'disinformation'. 'Disinformation' is a popular recourse by ufologists when they find that their cherished cases are falling apart in their hands. The idea that military authorities have deliberately used and promoted UFO rumours to discourage journalists has been put forward to explain aspects of the Roswell and Rendlesham cases which do not fit conveniently into the crashed spaceship theory. In both cases a supposed nuclear accident has been suggested as the root of the story.

When asked by US and German TV companies for her views on the 'recovered bodies' at Llandrillo, Randles replied 'I told all of the TV companies... that I was not about to help the government cover up the truth about this incident by acting as a disinformation agent on their behalf.'

John Rimmer.

CRASH-RETRIEVAL MOTIFS

- The precursor; e.g. something seen in the sky, an explosion heard, or mysterious object tracked by radar
- Crashed UFO; almost always in a remote place
- Aliens, dead or alive, in or near crashed UFO
- Arrival of military
- Civilians expelled from crash area
- Aliens cruelly treated by military
- Aliens helpless and unarmed, and apparently not very intelligent
- Military personnel sworn to secrecy
- Civilian witnesses threatened or bribed to keep silent
- Authorities give unconvincing cover story to media
- Authorities remove *all* wreckage from crash site, usually on a flat truck covered with a tarpaulin
- Witnesses pick up bits of wreckage but authorities *always* recover *all of it* from them
- US Air Force nearly always get involved, sometimes allegedly by putting pressure on government of country where crash occurs
- Long after event, persons contact ufologists to claim they were involved in recovery operation
- Such persons claim to have seen alien bodies or worked on UFO wreckage
- Official photographs, films or videos of aliens which are never made available or are obvious fakes

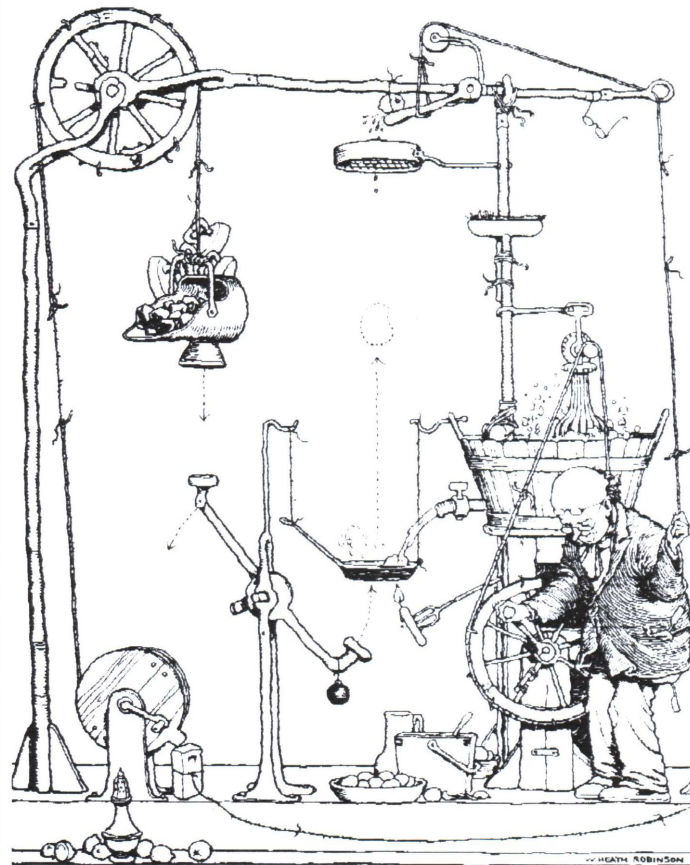
John Rimmer thought Heath Robinson was the king of strange devices, until he found out about

Mr Hutchinson's Amazing Machine

After Albert Budden's dramatic storming out of a Magonia Readers' Group Meeting a few months ago (oops, I wasn't going to say who it was, was I?) your Editor was anxious to hear him speak at November's BUFORA meeting, at which we were promised exclusive video footage of concrete blocks being set on fire by a hotch-potch of electromagnetic equipment in the laboratory of Canadian 'self-made' physicist John Hutchinson. As it was challenging this and other wild claims that provoked the dramatic Sunday night storm-out, Magonians were on tenterhooks as we took our seats in the University of Marylebone Road's lecture theatre. Although the video which Albert was about to show us would, if genuine, revolutionise our entire understanding of physics, it was apparently not so important that he felt it necessary to edit it beforehand. Consequently a large part of the evening (for which we paid the non-members' price of £3) was spent gazing at a blank flickering screen as Albert announced from the projection booth "There's another important demonstration somewhere here", and fast-forwarded randomly through the tape.

When at last we got to the relevant bits we first saw a room filled to bursting with what appeared to be random pieces of electrical and electronic equipment, and noted that those which made dramatic arcing effects were very much to the fore. We sat back, ready to be amazed.

The first of the 'poltergeist' effects we were treated to was a metal rod breaking in two before the camera. Well, we certainly saw a bar break in two but the effect was rather marred



by the fact that both ends of the rod disappeared out of the frame of the video. For all we could tell two circus strongmen were busily bending the metal out of shot - if indeed it was metal. Next we saw a piece of metal rocking backwards and forwards on a plywood board. Fairly easy to arrange, you might think, if someone was moving a magnet backwards and forwards underneath the board. But then we saw a small plastic dish moving across the plywood. Albert carefully reminded us that, in normal circumstances, plastic is not magnetic. Hmm... perhaps a strip of metal was stuck underneath the dish and the magnet was again being manipulated under the board? As if to answer this sceptical thought the dish suddenly

shot upwards out of the picture. For some reason the shaky, hand-held camera did not at this moment pan upwards to show us the plate stuck to the ceiling, or wherever it had gone. It remained tightly focussed on a cardboard milk carton standing on the table. This anomalous cardboard carton featured in all the subsequent shots, but remained resolutely unmoved. Perhaps the experimenters had just put it down there after having their coffee break. However, a number of other small items started moving around the table then suddenly shooting off upwards, to cries of amazement from Albert Budden. At no time, however, were we shown where these various items ended up. In fact we saw nothing other than the

wooden sheet apparently resting on a milk-crate, and the inside of a small plywood booth. None of the laboratory equipment that was supposedly causing these dramatic manifestations was visible at all.

It slowly began to dawn upon the sceptical Magonians that much the same effects could be produced if a series of small objects, with metal strips attached to them, were held to the underside of a plywood sheet by a magnet manipulated on top of the plywood. If the magnet was then suddenly removed the objects would fall down, rather than be levitated. If the camera recording these events was itself held upside-down we might well end up with a sequence of images looking remarkably what we were then viewing.

"They got a bit bored with this," Albert remarked, "and started messing around with yoghurt!". I thought for a moment we were in for a different kind of video, but no, this was levitating yoghurt. There was a small carton of a white substance on the by now familiar plywood board. Gradually, from the surface of the yoghurt, we saw a spike start growing 'upward', getting longer and longer until a large blob shot up the screen and disappeared out of the picture. No subsequent shot showed us where this viscous blob ended up. Of course, if a pot of yoghurt was held upside down, an effect such as this might well be observed - but don't try this at home!

It would not be true to say that this sequence of marvels was watched in awed silence by the audience. I certainly heard disrespectful titters from time to time. Some of the video sequences seemed to be segments

from Canadian TV news programmes. And, of course, there was, as there always is when dealing with weird scientific claims, an excerpt from a Japanese television documentary. I suppose they have to have something to put in between their curious torture-based game shows.

At question time I risked a comment: "What a shame that with all this complex equipment in his laboratory, Mr Hutchinson couldn't afford a wider angled lens and perhaps a camera tripod to give us clearer pictures, and let us see a bit of the surroundings to the experiments?"

"I know, I know," cried Albert, "I've told him, but he's such an eccentric character he does things his own way and takes no notice of anyone!" What a guy, hey.

No walk-out so far, so I risked a second question: "Have any of these experiments been reported in refereed scientific journals?"

"They've been investigated by MacDonald Douglas and the Max Planck Institute in Berlin."

"Really, in which journals can I read accounts of these investigations?"

"Well they've not actually been published but I can give you the names and addresses of the people who did the research."

I've not had the names yet, but be assured that when I do I'll keep you informed, and will let you know exactly what relationships the individuals concerned have to these prestigious organisations.

Besides we don't have to rely on other people's accounts. We could try it for ourselves. Budden flourished a sheaf of papers. These were the plans for making a 'poltergeist machine', which is what the cello-full of old electrical equipment was apparently called. For just £10 we could buy a set of plans and build our own. As I have enough problems connecting a VCR to a television, I declined the offer. I'm quite certain that any high energy electrical equipment that I wired up would certainly produce levitation: of me through the ceiling the moment I plugged it in. But the offer is there for any *Magonia* readers who feel up to it. I don't know where you would actually get a Tesla Coil or a Van der Graff generator, which seem to be

pretty essential, but I suppose you could probably pick them up on a Sunday morning down Brick Lane Market, next to the dodgy computer equipment.

Budden was winding down his talk, and murmurs were going round the audience about a demonstration we were about to have of a machine which could automatically produce out-of-body experiences. A curious looking character climbed on to the

themselves to the times and places of important UFO landings. Here they have been able to actually go inside the UFOs. Many of them, they have discovered, have been unmanned craft. Also, it is possible to travel into the future and wait for UFOs to land!

When you start making claims like this there's always one troublemaker in the audience (no, not a Magonian, honest) who asks: "could I travel a week into the future

"It's made from all sorts of electrical parts, I've got a bit of an American Lightning fighter aircraft in there"

stage, and Budden introduced him. This was Tony Bassett, with his little device.

Bassett was dressed in baggy corduroy trousers, red braces and a check lumberjack shirt with a pocket stuffed with an array of different coloured pens. So obviously here was another self-made engineer.

He produced a black box, about the size of a toolbox, with a lead attached, which he plugged into a socket at the back of the stage.

"With this machine, I can produce a force field which will fill this room, and about 80% of the people here will have an out of the body experience - guaranteed." He went on to explain that whilst floating around without bodily constraints, not only could we fly away across the rooftops of London like Dick Van Dyke in *Mary Poppins*, but also transport ourselves back in time. People have done this, he assured us, and transported

and find next week's National Lottery numbers?"

Oh, dear me no, quite impossible. You can't do irresponsible, selfish things like that! (I'd give half my ten million pounds to Mother Teresa, really!) Anyway, he warned, so many people are trying to divine those numbers by occult means that you might suffer terrible psychic damage if you even attempted to find out whilst in an out-of-body state.

All the while Tony Bassett was talking his plugged in little machine lay silently on the floor: "It's made from all sorts of electrical parts, I've got a bit of an American Lightning fighter aircraft in there", he assured us.

The audience was growing restive - When is he going to turn it on? Are we all going to have an OOB experience? Maybe we could just have a peek at the Lottery numbers - when a BUFORA apparatchik stepped forward:

"Unfortunately, as BUFORA does not have suitable insurance, for legal reasons Tony will not be able to demonstrate his machine. We may be liable to legal action for anything that happens."

Oh dear, m'learned friends strike again, BUFORA's cold feet were visibly shivering. Tony did turn the device on, but we were treated to just a few moments of an admittedly quite impressive buzzing noise, before 'for legal reasons', he turned it off again. Not only did this box of tricks slip you to and fro in time, we learned, but it would also cure most illnesses.

"If I signed a waiver that I wouldn't take any legal action, could I try it to cure my rheumatism?", asked one optimistic member of the audience. Sorry, but not even then. Legal reasons. One or two of the BUFORA officials were not looking terribly happy at this point, and the meeting was brought fairly rapidly to a close. Afterwards Tony was handing around his business cards to an eager throng. Curiously, he appears not to operate from a university engineering department, or a high-tech industrial research institute, but from Railway Arch Number 7, in Comden Lock Market. This is a North London tourist trap which caters less for research at the cutting edge of science and technology than it does for crystal therapy, vegetarian tofuburgers and bootleg music cassettes. Funny that.

I've got one of Tony's 'Space Trip Passports' in front of me as I write, and I notice the small print at the bottom: "The makers and distributors of Space Trip Passport will not be responsible for any mis-use of the product or for failure to treat properly any disease, as the circumstances of use are outside of their control". Sounds like the legal eagles have been busy again.

I walked out into the traffic-clogged Marylebone Road, feeling, as I always do after a BUFORA meeting, that yet another Saturday evening has been spent instructively in the company of some of our more endearing, if rather unconventional, fellow citizens. It certainly beats staying in and watching Jeremy Beadle. But we never got to see the concrete block catching fire. Pity.

Dear John Rimmer

An unnatural phenomenon which has received little attention from Fortean is the mysterious disappearance of portions of text from articles submitted to *Magonia*. The most recent victim has been my own piece on Ancient Astronauts: amongst other things, a mention of a guru with a TV set in his cave was rendered incomprehensible by the omission of the word "television", whilst a paragraph on the Ham and Dropa tribes vanished entirely.

Are these passages abducted from your computer by aliens, who are even now examining them in the blood-red sunshine of Krüger 60? Or does the editorial team suppress them to cover up the truth that *Magonia* is secretly running the world?

Enclosed are two book reviews, with implanted homing devices to keep track of their future movements.
Best wishes,
Gareth J Medway, London

Our apologies to Gareth Medway; the missing sections have been safely recovered and are available for examination on the Back Page.

LETTERS



Dear John,
Before you close the correspondence [with this letter - Ed.], a few items on the Gill affair.

Gill was a poor observer. This is borne out by two other sightings in Cruttwell's report - a 'riley lamp' seen near a mountain on April 9 (from a launch) which looks very much like Venus coupled with the boat's motion, the other on July 6 at Dogura with Venus in the exact position of the UFO. This latter was witnessed by ten people including one said by Cruttwell to be 'a man of great qualifications' who served in the RAAF and who 'knows a good deal about aircraft and a lot about stars'. Yet this was beyond doubt an observation of Venus at its brightest; in fact one witness later changed his mind about the UFO and maintained it was indeed Venus. *Gill was present on both occasions.*

There are several clues within Cruttwell's report suggesting that astronomical objects do account for the great majority of the 70-odd cases therein. Why, for instance, was it even suggested that Father Gill could have mistaken his CE3 for Venus? This idea was mooted in 1960, long before Menzel got involved, so who made this suggestion? Why was Gill even looking for Venus on June 26, the first night of his CE3 sightings? Had someone dropped him a hint that perhaps he could not recognise the planet when he saw it? Cruttwell does not say.

Other sightings during the wave were beyond a doubt combinations of Venus, Jupiter, other planets and bright meteors. Gill himself admitted that some of the smaller UFOs seen on the nights of June 26 and 27 may have been planets or stars (as Cruttwell says in his report), so it is really only the CE3s that defy explanation. Gill

also says the 'big one' appeared on the 28th, but was farther off and no figures were observed. Yet Gill implies this was the same as the CE3.

Equally baffling is the RAAF reply to the Victorian Flying Saucer Society which mentions Mars, Jupiter and Saturn as culprits but omits Venus which was then at maximum magnitude of -4.3! Were the RAAF just being polite to Gill and trying not to insult his intelligence? It is a very strange omission.

Nobody seems to have noticed that when Gill says he saw Venus with the UFO above it, he may well have mistaken Mars for Venus and Venus for the UFO. Mars was only 4 degrees below Venus on June 26, setting 15 minutes earlier, yet nobody, to my knowledge, has ever pointed this out.

Allan Hendry reveals in *The UFO Handbook*, (p. 85) how a CE3 turned out to be Venus, yet rejects this answer for Gill, presumably because Gill had many witnesses whereas his lone woman had not. Was Menzel in fact near the mark when he said that probably the natives had not seen the little men but were merely following their leader? We shall never know.

Neither do we know of Gill's UFO background before 1959, nor of his science fiction interest, if any. Cruttwell again is reticent and is too content to take Gill at face value. Cruttwell was already an ETHer as he admits; yet it is obvious that, barring the CE3s, nearly all his 1958-59 reports are of mistaken IFOs, and merely add padding to the Gill case. (The confirming sighting he gives, also on June 27 at Baniara, is a very clear case of Venus and Mars in close proximity.)

I find Martin Kottmeyer's boat solution strains credulity to the limit. I

also find Venus strains credulity to the limit. But what are we left with? Is it not even more remarkable that here was an ET craft, roaming the skies at close range for many hours for each of at least three consecutive evenings, witnessed by 30-plus people, yet not once did anyone attempt to photograph it, view it using an optical aid, or even report it to officials at the time. There does not even seem to be any contemporary mention in the press of this momentous event.

Gill's reply, to Hynek, many years later of why he went in to dinner with the UFO still over the mission station, sounds a bit contrived and not, I suspect, what he really believed in 1959.

If there is one UFO case where anyone reading the account wishes he or she had been present at the time, the Gill CE3 is surely it.

Sincerely,
Christopher Allan, Stoke-on-Trent

●●●

Dear Magonia,
After reading the review of my latest book, *UFOs - Psychic Close Encounters: The Electromagnetic Indictment*, written by Peter Rogerson, there are more than a few corrections and facts to which I would like to draw your attention.

Firstly however, let us compare Peter Rogerson's opinion against that of others concerning my electromagnetic pollution approach that he dismisses as "chaotic pot-pourri of science, speculative science and downright pseudo-science". For example, Dr Jacques Vallée wrote after reading my work:

"Frankly, when I read your book, I was delighted and stunned at the elegance of your approach - and a bit peeved that I hadn't thought of it! But it takes someone with your experience

and background in the field to describe this credibly."

Then Professor Kenneth Ring, of the Department of Psychology, University of Connecticut wrote:

"I found myself this morning forced to yield to a compulsion to read your book immediately, and so I have. Fascinating! As I had surmised yesterday, you are really on to something here with your thesis, and I myself am inclined to concur with a great deal of what you have to say and suppose about the basis of so-called alien abductions. I congratulate you on a masterful job of sorting through the evidence on electronic pollution, allergies, and electrical sensitivity in order to show how certain environmental and neurological factors may conspire to give rise to this phenomenon. Your work deserves a wide hearing and needs to be reckoned with, and I hope it will receive the attention that is due to it."

Then Dr David Gotlib wrote after I submitted an article for the *Bulletin of Anomalous Experience*, saying:

"I think you're on to something here and I really do look forward to the promised volume...I hope you will build on this initial work. In particular, I think a systematic study demonstrating a correlation between reported abduction experiences and say, proximity to power lines at the location where the experience was reported..."

Dr Michael Persinger also wrote, telling me:

"The hypothesis developed within your text is a bold conjecture; you are to be complimented. You have combined measured inferencing with scientific principle."

I could go on, quoting from letters from other academics in a variety of sciences that I have received from around the world. I dunno. If I had to choose between the opinions of Rogerson and these people, I know who I would pick.

Rogerson then goes on to assure us that evidence of visionary experience should be constantly increasing as EM pollution increases, but "Of course this is not true". Considering that we have a virtual epidemic of alien abduction experiences reported

from those countries which have had sophisticated electronic communication systems such as the UK and the USA, I am not too sure what he means. What I have done is simply come along and identified the environmental and clinical parameters of such internal visionary experiences which, incidentally, are unrecognised by experiencers, and are not part of the authorised myth. In fact, these characteristics are so robust, and occur with such monotonous regularity, that things are getting boring for me now.

Another error that Rogerson makes is to suggest that electromagnetic hypersensitivity (EH) "may be a socially constructed disorder such as Mesmer's 'mesmeric trance' or Charcot's 'hysteria'..." He demonstrates his knowledge of the historical perspective wonderfully, but seems unaware of the current research on EH. Much of this was aired via the presentations of papers at the International Conference on Electromagnetic Hypersensitivity at Graz, Austria in 1994 (sponsored by the Dept. for Clinical Engineering and the Institute for Biomedical Engineering at Graz University). Also, the Robens Institute, University of Surrey have a study project on EH, and Dr Mark Payne who wrote *Superhealth*, both treats and studies this condition, as does the Breakspear Hospital, Herts. Also, there are various papers such as: "The Diagnosis and Therapy of Electrical Hypersensitivities" and "Electrical Sensitivities in Allergy Patients" by Dr C.W. Smith, Dr Ray Choy and Dr Jean Monro. (I can give more details if required, but I think not, eh?)

And this brings me to the libellous dismissal of Dr Jean Monro's work by Rogerson. I love the way he falsely abbreviates and glibly shunts the work of this doctor (and by doing this, her medical co-workers too) into the fringes of the absurd by telling us that my quotations referring to environmental medicine aspects are "indistinguishable from the radiesthesia and little black boxes of a previous era". Monro's medical career spans over thirty years and includes positions of Medical Directorship at six hospitals, including The Lister Hospital, Nightingale Hospital, Humana Hospital

Wellington and the Breakspear. She is Medical Advisor of the Coeliac Association, and medical Advisor to various national charities, including Sanity, the Henry Doubleday Research Association and was on the subcommittee for Hospital Medical Services of the BMA for four years. Again, I could go on.

And as far as telling readers that "Budden suggests that the 'crashed saucer' at Roswell has been assembled by psychokinesis" - well, this is a corny old trick. Take something out of context and it then looks silly. Rogerson does not mention the clearly conjectural mood I had worked up in the previous pages, and the fact that this idea was expressed as a rhetorical question.

And this brings me to Rogerson's mood and manners. He seems unable to state his points without recourse to personal insult and sarcasm. I asked the editor of a well-known scientific journal if he had to edit out such things as "in your guts you know he's nuts" or other Rogersonisms: "The catchword was 'electromagnetic' (but not as we know it Captain)" or similar childishness. He told me that it crops up sometimes in submitted reviews, and when it does, it was usually a sure sign that "you've got them rattled". That is to say, they feel that insult somehow adds weight to their argument, but really, it says more about them than about the thing they are reviewing.

Well, if I thought this was going to be published in *Magonia*, I could provide copies of the letters I have quoted from, but I don't think so. As my colleague says - "You've got them rattled..."

Albert Budden, Brentford, Middlesex

...

Dear Mr Rimmer,

I have received a copy of the book review of *Magonia* 55/14 in which reference is made, I presume, to my work by your reviewer. For your information a programme broadcast on October 15 1990 was subject to legal proceedings and I received a complete apology from Granada Television, copy attached.

Furthermore, I am a consultant to a hospital in Germany which offers its services to patients paid for by state

World in
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contention
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principal
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Dr Munro
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by most
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medical
opinion...

insurance schemes which are the equivalent of our National Health Service. In addition, your remark that I have 'parted company with mainstream medicine' is entirely wrong, because although some practitioners do not agree with our views, nevertheless, our patients are virtually all referred by doctors, only a few not so from overseas. We receive funding for treatment from more than 35 Health Authorities for patients from their own district and we regard ourselves as providing a service for metabolic and nutritional investigations and treatment which are curative often rather than suppressive of symptoms. These methods have allowed us to restore health to many patients. I therefore wish you to acknowledge that your reviewer had a somewhat biased view with regard to my practice.

Yours sincerely,

Jean A. Monro, MB, BS, MRCS, LRCP, FAAEM, DIBEM, MACOEM

Medical Director

Consultant Physician,

Fachkrankenhaus Nordfriesland,

Bredstedt, Germany

Breakspear Hospital, Hertfordshire

● Extract from statement read in court by the Solicitor for the Plaintiff in Dr Monro's libel action against Granada television:

"World in Action stands by its contention that the principal treatments offered by Dr Monro are not supported by most orthodox medical opinion, but wishes to make clear that it did not intend to suggest that she takes wrongful advantage of her patients' vulnerability by charging them fees for treatment she knows is worthless..."

●●●

Dear John,

I would like to express my appreciation for your generous review of my *High Strangeness* (Magonia 57), even if we do disagree about the merits of *The Unidentified*, the very thought of whose continued existence induces cringes in this quarter. But anyway:

Concerning your complaint that *High Strangeness* has an overwhelmingly American emphasis - well, of course. It has always been my intention to deal with world ufology elsewhere. Perhaps you missed this sentence on p. xxv of *HS* opening

essay: 'A separate volume will examine ufology from an international perspective, with essays on UFO research in various countries.' This is a volume which, unlike the others, I will edit, not write, and seek contributions from those best qualified to write about their countries or regions.

I am currently at work on a revised omnibus volume of *The UFO Encyclopedia* series, to be published in both hard and soft covers (in the latter instance an abridged trade-paperback edition). Over the next year or two I plan to write an encyclopedia volume on '90s ufology as well as put together the international book.

As to your question about the Andreasson case ('Isn't it more likely that it's just confabulation?'), I believe the answer is no. I refer interested readers to the discussion on pp 14-16. In cases like these, it seems a futile exercise to demand a simple answer.

Thanks again for the good words.

Cordially,

Jerome Clark,

Canby, Minnesota, USA

●●●

Mr Rimmer,

Obviously, our dear friend Margaret Buckingham of Bournemouth (Magonia 57) misunderstood my question concerning why the 'covert-minded aliens' would return the abductees with their underwear on askew (i.e., on backwards or inside out). I didn't mean to imply that the greys aren't kidnapping millions of Earthlings. I wasn't suggesting that the greys don't exist. I was simply searching for an explanation of why they would do such an unusual thing.

Thanks to Margaret's detailed letter, and the many ufological insights she so generously shared with us, I believe I now have an answer to my enquiry. First of all, the greys are probably not the emotionless, unfeeling and purely clinical little monsters that many abduction experts say they are. In fact, they may at least share the common emotion of humour with us Earthlings as demonstrated by their outrageous antics with the abductees' nighties - not to mention the fact that they occasionally drop off their bewildered captives at the wrong house, the wrong room, and even tuck them into the wrong bed from time to time.

Naturally, when an abductee awakens and discovers that he or she is actually wearing a perfect stranger's underwear - well, I guess even a sceptic like you can imagine the greys tearfully giggling and rolling about on the UFO's floor.

So, it seems that the transformational aspects of the abduction experience are not restricted to cosmic enlightenment and cross-breeding experimentation - but, also include cross-dressing forays as well. What's more, if one's wife should discover strange female nighties mixed in with the wash, she shouldn't automatically assume that her husband may have been unfaithful while she was out of town. Rather, she should be thankful that the greys have returned him safely and immediately examine his scoop marks to see if they might require medical attention.

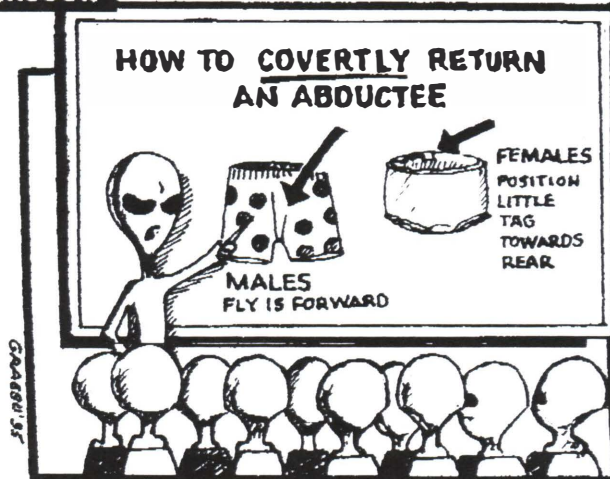
As you probably know, John, it's high time that someone took you and your staff of debunking sceptics to task for your outrageous non-believing behaviour; and, I'm truly delighted that Margaret is going to keep an eye on you and your gang in the future. Perhaps there is someone or some agency in the UK that might return the favour (?) - at least I hope so. Anyway, my suggestion for Margaret would be to set up a 'UFO exchange foundation' (i.e., an abductee undergarment lost and found). For, obviously, such a service for humanity is sorely needed, and the joy of reuniting people with their panties and briefs (on a global scale) might well be as uplifting an experience as being beamed aboard.

Sincerely,

Matthew J. Graeber,

Norristown, Pennsylvania, USA

GRAEBER



" ANY QUESTIONS...? "

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Whitley Strieber. Break-through: the next step. Harper paperbacks, 1996. £6.99.

Some years ago at a UFO conference in Sheffield I was talking to Eddie Bullard and Bertrand Méheust about possible future trends in abduction narratives. We speculated that one such might be the arrival of the 'dead among the fairies' motif. Well several such narratives are included in the range of bizarre experiences reported by Strieber and his correspondents in this book. By now Strieber is well into post-secularism, with his claim that the purpose of the 'visitors' is to help us "become a species where consciousness transcends the boundaries of the world to gain control over the very form physical reality takes, to ride the wings of time - all of these things are possible for us."

There are pages more of this sort of inflated language without content, meaning or rational analysis. For Whitley, as with many other abductees, the boundaries between dream and waking seem to blur completely. We should also note the oscillation in his moods, between periods of blocked, shattered despair and periods of ecstasy, suggesting his emotional life may be not too different from that other urban shaman, Alan Garner.

There is an incongruous part of the book where Strieber relates a variety of conspiracy theories and lends credibility to the infamous Cydonia face. Rather more interesting is the author's suggestion that the raw narratives presented to him and other correspondents rarely follow the Hopkins-Mack standard format. *PR*

R E V I E W S



Jacques Vallée and Tracy Torme. Fastwalker. Berkeley, California, Frog Press.

Fastwalker is a novelisation of the film script of Vallée's 1986 novel *Alintel*, previously only available in French. As such it reads like a film and ends up feeling like an improbably good episode of *The X-Files*. Sadly, it never got made, probably because it is reasonably intelligent and accordingly cynical about UFOs, the American government's involvement with them, and the people that obediently await salvation from the skies.

In the foreword Vallée states that the ideas in the book are not necessarily those that he holds concerning the UFO phenomenon. It would be nice to think that they are, however, and they do all seem to have been brought up at some point or other in his non-fiction work. So we have *Alintel*, a secret group set up in the forties to analyse the UFO problem. They learn very little, other than that a lot of mileage can be made from their mysterious flying friends and begin to plan a new world order based on the fear of a non-existent all powerful alien threat. Thus the majority of UFO encounters are holographically generated illusions, the abduction is a mind control experiment fronted by dwarfs in 'grey' costumes, and UFO research groups and believer cults are all CIA or *Alintel* operations. Their nefarious plans start to crystallise when they capture a real live *Fastwalker*, but this turns out to be a form of inter-dimensional portal, not the nuts'n'bolts flying weapon they had hoped for, and so confuses everybody. Not to be discouraged they take over the world anyway leaving our heroes either partially insane or chronically disillusioned.

There are plenty of references to real-life personalities, secret documents and famous cases to keep the saucer-spotters happy, and Vallée teases us into wondering whether he really does know something we don't, or if he's just extremely paranoid. It's a quick, fun read, though not brilliantly written ('feverishly scrubbing herself like a rape victim') and far less satisfying than Vallée's other work. Still would have made a great film though. *Mark Pilkington*



Jacques Vallée writes a superior *X-Files* episode

Lee Bailey and Jenny Yates. The Near-Death Experience: a reader. Routledge, 1996. £14.99

A varied collection of pieces assembled by two religion professors at liberal arts colleges in the States. Although there are sceptical pieces by Robert Kastenbaum, Susan blackmore and Karl Jansen the bulk of the selection is by true believers. It suffers, like all such collections, to a

degree of repetition. Several of the chapters, including editor Bailey's, are written in the overblown style of Californian mystic babble, which means very little but is clearly the cultural sign of post-modernity.

Kastenbaum makes an important point, which cannot be overemphasised. As with all the other phenomena discussed in *Magonia* we are not dealing with experiences, but with reports and narratives. In some case we are not even dealing with first-person reports, but with records made by others. These reports may be means by which incoherent experiences and/or memories are given order and meaning. In constructing these narratives resort will be made to a variety of cultural influences.

Also reproduced is an extract from the narrative of George Ritchie from which much of the modern interest in NDE is derived. Curiously these extracts omit the portion where Ritchie describes being taken by Jesus to a bar, where he sees demons leaping into the bodies of alcoholics. *PR*

F. David Peat. Blackfoot Physics: a journey into the Native American universe. Fourth Estate, 1996. £7.99

Westerners have traditionally shown two responses to other cultures: either to see them as primitive savages to be kicked out of the way, or romanticised as 'Noble Savages' gifted with eternal wisdom and living in harmony with nature, in contrast to our over-sophisticated, materialistic selves. Seldom do we allow them to be like ourselves, with the same mixture of wisdom and folly, virtue and vice. It is, of course, the romantic viewpoint that Peat adopts in this classic of politically correct post-modernism.

He seeks to compare what he calls 'indigenous science' with modern science, almost invariably to the disadvantage of the latter; comparing the former's spirituality and holism with the latter's cold, objective materialistic approach. At times it seems that Peat can only establish the validity of someone else's culture by devaluing his own.

There are a number of problems with this approach. Firstly, there have to be limits to relativism, however politically incorrect it is to say so. The Earth *does* revolve around the sun and not vice-versa: this is not just a 'cultural truth', but transcultural. It is, in so far as the words have meaning, 'really true' and was so before human beings evolved. And if we accept radical relativism, where do we start anyway: that it was acceptable for the Aztecs to sacrifice thousands of prisoners to keep the sun on its cosmic journey? If we start on that road we end up arguing that the Holocaust was acceptable because the Nazi's sincerely believed that the world would be a better place if there were no Jews or Gypsies in it.

We should beware of constructing notions like 'indigenous science' as if the 'native Americans' were some sort of uniform mass living a timeless, historic 'tradition'. There were many different native American cultures all changing at a fairly rapid rate. For example, in 1880 the horse was central to many such cultures, yet it had been introduced only 250 years earlier.

What Peat presents as native American culture is a sanitised 'Pocahontas' vision, in which all references to warfare, witchcraft and the extinction by hunting of indigenous species have been eliminated. We do not find it strange that the beliefs and opinions of a Church of England clergyman of 1996 are very different from his counterpart of 1896, why should we assume otherwise for other cultures and religions? Reinventing yourself to suit changing values and sensibilities is a perfectly sensible thing to do.

**Reviews by Peter Rogerson
except where stated.**

Andrew Collins. *From the Ashes of Angels* Michael Joseph, 1996. £16.99

The old legends of the Middle East have been re-worked in various ways, whether used as a basis for handbooks on magic, or to promote Ancient Astronaut hypotheses. Following Graham Hancock's popularisation of the idea of a lost ancient civilisation, Andy Collins supposes that legends about Angels, such as those in the book of Enoch, refer to his forgotten race.



Collins has been tamed a bit by his publishers: here there are no magical battles with Black Alchemists, nor even pints of beer in The Griffin, though there is a vegetarian curry in a Zoroastrian fire temple. But there is a useful guided tour through ancient myths, and those who cannot accept Collins' interpretations would be advised to read the book anyway, and invent their own rival theories to explain them.

Gareth Medway

Damian Thompson. *The End of Time: faith and fear in the shadow of the millenium.*

Sinclair Stevenson, 1996. £16.99

This is an important and timely study, tracing the development of the millennial theme from its Biblical roots to contemporary manifestations. Thompson suggests that millennialism grows in times of stress and uncertainty, when old ways of life are changing. Thus Biblical apocalyptic dates from times of military occupation and cultural imperialism. The impact of Hellenic and Romano-Hellenic cultures in Israel can perhaps be paralleled by the impact of modern Western culture in parts of the Third World today. Although the impact can be liberating it can also be shattering. Restorationist movements arise led by charismatic figures, and thaumaturgical, post-political leaders who promise supernatural intervention which will sweep aside the corrupt and evil occupiers and restore the people to at least freedom, and perhaps world domination.

It was in such an atmosphere that the *Revelation* of St John emerged, and Thompson concludes that it was one of the most profound cultural influences on the whole history and intellectual development of Western Europe.

R. C. Finucane. *Appearances of the Dead: a cultural history of ghosts.* Prometheus, 1996, £12.50.

Although witchcraft has been the subject of many scholarly books and passionate intellectual debate, the ghost story has been largely neglected and abandoned to psychical researchers, amateur folklorists and the heritage industry. It is therefore a pleasure to see this work by a professional historian re-published after twelve years.

Finucane is not concerned as to whether ghost stories are 'true', but rather with what the narratives reveal about the society in which they were told. His history, from Roman times

Thompson discusses the question of whether apocalyptic fears were rampant and AD 1000. He concludes that they were probably not as strong as in current popular belief, but more than modern revisionist historians have conceded. He then follows the paths of the millennial movements in the Middle Ages, including the social movements surrounding the English Revolution. He sees millennial belief driving such modern secular religions as the Triumph of Progress, Marx's Classless Society, or Hitler's Thousand Year Reich. To which we could add the ultimate apocalypse of our own time, Pol Pot's 'Year Zero'.

It is Part II of this book which *Magonia* readers are likely to find most interesting. Thompson's account of contemporary PMT - Pre-Millennium Tension - where he discusses millennial beliefs of conservative evangelists, along with the 'Toronto Blessing'. Other topics he analyses include fringe Marian groups centred around rumours of the Third Prophecy of Fatima, millennial movements in Korea and the Aum Shinrikyo sect in Japan.

I think we must conclude that although much of the belief survey by Thompson in this book is crazy, scary, and often bigoted and embittered, the absence of any belief in the possible transformation of self and society would be scarier still.

onwards, shows how ghost stories have evolved. In medieval and early modern times ghosts were portrayed as active, interacting with the world, demanding justice, warning of the perils of sin and of the awfulness of judgement. From Victorian times, under the influence of the SPR they were relegated to the fringes, like children and servants, who should be seen but not heard, and were reduced to flitting discreetly down corridors, simply mute evidence of the afterlife. In his final chapter Finucane suggests that little has changed between modern ghost stories and those of the Victorians. Although recent changes suggest that more active ghosts might be making a comeback, this reprint is still highly recommended.

Nick Pope, *Open Skies, Closed Minds*, Simon & Schuster, 1996. £14.99

Papal fallibility



'We have no proof that an alien craft landed in Rendlesham Forest, but we have no proof that it didn't.' After discovering this gem on page 151 I am at a loss as to how to proceed; it just about sums it up.

Well, you might ask, what about Rendlesham Forest? Does Pope manage to shed any new light on the affair? Why don't I get on with my review? Why is Pope, or his ghost-writer Mei Trow, so fond of question marks? Do you think it might be catching?

Anyone who looks for any revelations about UFOs over Britain will be disappointed. Most of the book consists of rehashes of the various topics usually discussed under the rubric of ufology, and the treatment is generally credulous and uncritical.

In discussing the Rendlesham Forest affair, Pope makes much of Lt-Col Halt's notorious memo to the Ministry of Defence (MoD). Apparently Halt never got so much as an acknowledgment from the MoD. Perhaps they found it too embarrassing. The memo describes Halt and his men wandering around in the forest looking at lights which they fail to identify. Of course, if they could not identify them then they could not have known how far away they were. Pope brushes aside suggestions that they may have been fooled by Orford Ness lighthouse, and possibly by the lights of cars on nearby roads. Many of you have probably heard the tape recording which was made at the time, on which, to put it charitably, the speakers sound somewhat confused and disorientated. In the last paragraph of his memo, Halt says that two star-like UFOs hung around in the sky for an hour in the

north and another one for two to three hours in the south. Now, most ordinary folk and, indeed, most ufologists would refer to star-like objects which remain in the sky for hours as - well - stars, perhaps. Or maybe planets. If Halt *really* believed they were UFOs, he was surely in a position to initiate the necessary action to investigate them.

Pope, a civil servant in the MoD, wrote this book after adopting a rather high profile during his three years in a posting which involved dealing with UFO reports. He claims that he was the only person in the MoD responsible for investigating them, though no well-informed ufologists believe this. He reminds us that the MoD line is that UFOs are of no defence significance. Perhaps not, but if pilots see things which they can't identify, then these are certainly of air safety significance and have to be investigated by suitably qualified officials.

Pope seems to think that because he is unable to explain a series of UFO sightings then there is no explanation apart from the tired old alien spacecraft one. He knows better than his superiors in the MoD and their counterparts in other countries, who have been saying for the past 50 years that the UFOs do not constitute a threat. If they were wrong, we would not be here to argue about the matter.

The highlight of Pope's stint at the UFO desk was the wave of sightings over Britain on the night of 30-31 March 1993. These were similar to the Belgian flap which had occurred on the same date three years earlier. He plotted the sightings

on a map and he remarks: 'The resulting pattern did not give me the straight line I'd hoped for...' No, he does not explain why he had hoped for a straight line. Many of the reports described a triangular object or a triangular arrangement of lights. It does not seem to have occurred to him that many of these reports were perhaps not independent of each other. Police officers have radios and most people have telephones. For example, he mentions sightings at Cosford, Rugeley and Shawbury involving mysterious lights associated with a peculiar humming sound. Although he does not mention the fact, these sightings were not entirely independent. According to my source, what happened was as follows. A family in Rugeley were 'very distressed' by a large diamond-shaped object flying over them. This incident was reported to MoD Police at RAF Cosford, who phoned the meteorologist on duty at RAF Shawbury describing the incident at 0115 (31 March). At 0130 they called again, very excited, saying that they had seen the thing themselves and that it seemed to be heading towards Shawbury. At 0135 the meteorologist went outside and saw a similar object which he watched for several minutes until it suddenly sped across the airfield making a 'low humming noise'. Of course this does not invalidate the reports, but such communications between witnesses and potential witnesses during a UFO flap must be taken into account in any serious investigation.

Apart from Pope's own experiences at the MoD the book is padded out with the usual credulous rubbish about Roswell, crop circles and cattle mutilations. Pope has now gone on the UFO lecture circuit and has been given an enormous advance for his next book. So, don't buy this book and waste your time reading it. Write your own crappy UFO book and watch your bank balance grow.

Incidentally, seeing and writing about UFOs will not damage your career, as popular belief has it. Pope was promoted when he was switched to his next job, and the met. observer at Shawbury has also been promoted and is now a weather forecaster.

JOHN HARNEY

He claims that he was the only person in the MoD investigating UFO reports, though no well-informed ufologists believe this.



Peter Brookesmith: but what's the Government keeping under its hat?

He produces a balanced history in which the United States government, far from being an omnipotent conspirator, is as confused as everyone else.

Peter Brookesmith. *UFO: the Government Files*, Blandford, 1996. £14.99.

Using the history of US government investigations as a scaffolding, Brookesmith produces a concise but well-rounded history of American ufology. He also produces one of the sanest and most perceptive books on the subject for quite some time. He eschews both credulous belief, and the more sneering kind of know-it-all scepticism to produce a balanced history; one in which the United States government, far from being an omnipotent conspirator, is as confused as everyone else.

There are a number of points of special interest. Take for instance his revisionist account of the Condon Enquiry, with Condon as the hero and Saunders and Macdonald as villains. He is too much the gentleman to delve into the extent to which Macdonald's markedly manic-depressive character made relationships with colleagues so difficult. I would add the caveat that Condon had in some way begun to associate interest in UFOs with campus indiscipline, and a perceived

lowering of academic standards. This led to demands in his Report that teachers who used UFO books in course-work should be censured, and his curious demand to Vice-President Agnew a few years later that a UFO conference should be refused permission to use the facilities of a university campus.

In the second part of the book, Brookesmith examines the 'dark side' of ufology: MJ12, Roswell and other conspiracy theories, disposing of them admirably. He presents what must be closest to the truth of the infamous Bentwaters case that the current libel laws will allow. For me however, the highlight of the book is a demolition job on Jesse Marcel of Roswell fame, quoting researcher Robert Todd's discovery that Marcel was a liar and a braggart over his service record. This is a key, but not the only, piece is a total demolition of the Roswell legend. He quotes my semi-tongue-in-cheek speculations in *Magonia* 54. In light of the new revelations about Marcel, all but number one can now be disposed of.

In summary: go out and buy this book now.

David Clarke with Andy Roberts. *Twilight of the Celtic Gods* Cassell, 1996. £16.99

The authors are concerned mainly with what they consider to be authentic survivals of Pagan Celtic belief and custom, mainly in Cheshire and the Pennines. They take care to distinguish them from neo-Pagan revivals, of which they are scornful. The trouble is that it is rarely possible to prove that a custom is genuinely old, and certainly many 'medieval' folk traditions were invented by the Victorians. In any case, the difference is probably less important than people think. Evangelical 'revivalist' groups are usually recognised as authentically Christian, and the most significant thing about any rite is that people feel the need to practise it. A more useful distinction would be to notice that those interviewed for this book are country people, not highly educated, whose families have lived in the same area for as long as they can remember. Modern Pagans, by contrast, are mostly displaced intellectuals.

Gareth Medway

Paul Edwards. *Reincarnation: a critical examination*. Prometheus, 1996. £24.00

A major, sceptical critique of the claims and evidence for reincarnation, along with (although not suggested in the title) the near death experience, written by an American philosopher.

Edwards examines the evidence for reincarnation, whether in the form of claimed abilities such as those of child prodigies, or the claims of hypnotic regression, spontaneous recall and the cases collected by Ian Stevenson. He launches a full-frontal attack on the idea of Karma, showing its proponents invariably lead themselves into morally repugnant and absurd notions. He also fairly definitively demolishes the idea of an astral body.

Of particular interest is his critical re-examination of the story of George Ritchie, which practically launched the modern NDE movement, showing how one key episode has been told with quite contradictory details in various tellings. He also notes a number of mis-statements and

examples of 'gilding the lily' in Robert Moody's version of the Ritchie story. He could have made an even more important point; that Moody and other more recent retailers of Ritchie's story have been careful to remove some of the more conservative Christian propaganda from it.

Whilst I was generally sympathetic to the arguments of this book, I did find that the use of ridicule in the Prometheus house-style, and a degree of class condescension was at times grating. Writers such as Sue Blackmoor who avoid this style often make their points more convincingly. I also think it is rather dishonest of sceptics to keep quoting Ion Wilson as if he was one of their number, in view of his Montague Summers-ish views on other topics. Nevertheless, recommended.

James Sharpe. *Instruments of Darkness: Witchcraft in England 1550 - 1750* Hamish Hamilton, 1996. £25.00

A major new study of English witchcraft, tracing the growth and decline of witchcraft prosecutions, the role of élite and popular beliefs, and the impact of emerging science on witchcraft. Sharpe substantially revises the popular notion that there were substantial differences between English and Continental witchcraft beliefs. He also challenges any easy notion that such beliefs retreated before 'science', pointing out for example how several members of the Royal Society, such as Joseph Glanville, were fervent believers in witchcraft.

In the final chapter he suggests that though the élite withdrew support from witchcraft in the early eighteenth century, popular beliefs may have remained substantially unaffected.

He also makes it clear that we cannot simply dismiss belief in witchcraft, or those who organised the prosecutions as simply stupid or malicious, and rejects the simplistic notion that witch-hunts were nothing but misogyny - if most witchcraft defendants were women, so were many accusers. An essential book for any understanding of early-modern witchcraft.

Kevin McClure. *The Fortean Times Book of the Millennium*
John Brown, 1996. £9.99.

Keep this slim paperback close at hand as you wade through all the millennium hysteria that will be washing around over the next three years, it will be an invaluable guide. If you're familiar with the author's work in *Magonia* and his own magazines, you'll already know the kind of level-headed exposition of bizarre concepts that can be found in this volume.

The book presents a history of millennial ideas, beginning with the Biblical prophecies of Daniel and Revelations, which are put firmly in the historical and political contexts of their time. This leads on to an outline of other Christian millennarian prophecies such as those of the Millerites, and less well-known ones like the Native American 'Ghost Dance' movement.

A chapter reviews Nostradamus and the 'King of Terror' prophecy, concluding, as I think is the only sensible comment on Nostradamus, "Maybe I'm too fussy, but what's the use of a prophecy that can't be understood until after the event it prophecies?"

Kevin is the author of an important popular work on the subject of Marion visions [*Evidence for Visions of the Virgin Mary*, Aquarian, 1984] so it is not surprising that he looks in some detail at millennial prophecies which are alleged to come from that source, in particular the so-called Third Prophecy of Fatima. Again, he shows that these messages are best understood through a study of religious, social and political events at the time they were made, rather than transposing them to any future era.

The prophecies of Malachy, a series of mottoes for past and future Popes, which first appeared in the sixteenth century, are examined. According to this chronology only two more Popes are left after John Paul II. And here *Magonia* makes its own prophecy. The 'motto' for the next Pope is 'The Glory of the Olive'. One of the leading figures considered as a possible successor to the present

Pope is Cardinal Martini... and what do you put in a martini? Remember, you read it here first.

Just about every modern millennial and apocalyptic prophet and preacher gets a mention, from Waco and the militias, the new Religious Right (who not only make prophecies but some of them, like the Aum cult, seem to be in a position to do something about them), to the drippier New Age end of the movement like the Celestine prophecies

Kevin writes sceptically, but not dismissively. His background in theology and the study of modern religious movements allows him to understand just why people not only believe a dozen impossible things, but also structure their entire lives around those beliefs.

In just 144 pages this is not going to be the definitive book on millennial beliefs, but it's a good pocket guide to just who's around at the moment, what they're saying, and most importantly whether they're likely to be doing anything that's going to bother you.

John Rimmer

Jenny Randles and Peter Hough. *Life After Death and the World Beyond*. Piatkus, 1996. £16.99.

An investigation into alleged communications from the dead and descriptions of the afterlife, received through mediums. It would appear that the latest phenomenon here is TV images from beyond. The authors gently indicate their scepticism. Medium's descriptions of the afterlife are included, the heyday of which was in the inter-war years. Such narratives are best seen as examples of the Utopian hopes of the petit-bourgeois of the period - Victorian values and astral Mechanics' Institutes. Today things are going downmarket, with reports of astral supermarkets. Surely the Summerland branch of MacDonald's cannot be far away.

I don't think that any of the material in this book tells us anything about the afterlife - nor, I suspect, do the authors - but it reveals something rather sad about both the credulity and impoverish imagination of sections of our society.

●●●

Blandford Forum



Celtic Cross design by Anthony Rees, from *Celtic Connections*

One of the great paranormal puzzles attracting the attention of many magazine editors is just who is buying all the books on Celtic mysticism that Blandford are publishing? More specifically I want to know why Blandford's publicity department keeps sending them to *Magonia* for review. And even more strangely, why *don't* they send us review copies of the numerous UFO books they publish, such as Peter Brookesmith's *UFO's: the Government Files?* We had to go out and buy our own copy of that one!

Never mind. There are a lot of books to get through, so here goes.

Myths of the Middle Ages, edited by John Matthews (£16.99), reprints a selection of twelve stories from Sabine Baring-Gould's *Curious Myths*, first published in 1869. The stories retold here include Prester John, the legend of the dog Gellert, and the history of the Fortunate Isles, among others. Attractive full-page illustrations by Peter Komarnycky help relieve the uniformity of the solid text.

Celtic Myth and Legend, by Mike Dixon Kennedy, (£16.99) is an alphabetic encyclopaedia of personalities and places from Celtic mythology. The entries are concise and well cross-indexed, but probably too brief for the serious student, yet rather to many of them for the general

reader.

More interesting to the casual browser is David James and Siman Bostock's *Celtic Connections* (£16.99), a colourfully illustrated history of Celtic Europe from the Bronze Age to the modern revival. It deals with artifacts and crafts, the development of the Celtic peoples, and their religions. More straight history than folklore, this is probably the most accessible of the Celtic titles.

A narrower cultural range is described in *Celtic Bards, Celtic Druids* (£18.99) by the ubiquitous R. J. Stewart and Robin Williamson. Largely a collection of poems, stories and songs, the authors also describe the story-telling tradition. Tales and songs which are intended to be heard make tedious reading in cold print, although the illustrations by Chris Down are attractive.

Broadening out from Celtic culture, Elizabeth Hollam's *Gods and Goddesses* (£16.99 - is this the standard Blandford price?) provides a sort of Yellow-Pages of the world's mythologies; look up the topic you're interested in - Sun, War and Peace, Arts and Crafts, Fertility - and you find brief descriptions of the relevant gods from around the world. Nicely produced, with useful illustrations.

John Rimmer

H O L D T H E B A C K P A G E



Grovelling Apologies

to Gareth Medway for the strange disappearance of part of his article in *Magonia* 57. The missing pieces are, in italics:

Page 5, column one, end of second paragraph: "He said his original home was a cave in the Himalayas, which was equipped with its own *television set*. He explained that they had to get one in order to see the dramatisation of the Mahabharata, as it was a religious duty to watch it."

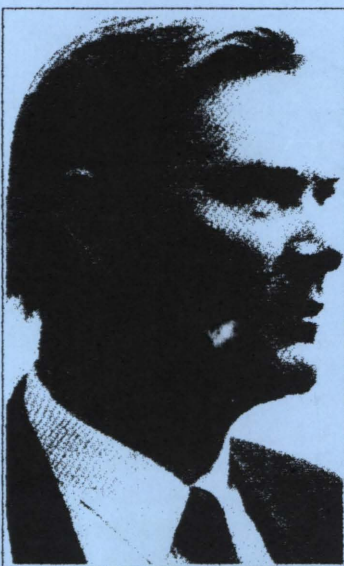
Page 6, column four, eleven lines from the bottom: "Such mistakes are enough to disprove the old contention that it is all the word of God, dictated by the Holy Spirit to scribes incapable even of ordinary clerical error. *The born-again Christian response is that it is not possible to understand the Bible properly unless you are born again in Jesus: anyone who raises objections like the above is still under the influence of Satan. UFO writers are divided on the issue. Some, like Dione, regard it as wholly accurate, and merely in need of scientific interpretation. By contrast, W. Raymond Drake's 'Gods and Spacemen in the Ancient East' (Neville Spearmon, 1968; Sphere, 1993)...*"

Financial Times

As John Harney comments in his review of Nick Pope's book, publishers are throwing a lot of money around these days for UFO books. According to the trade journal *The Bookseller*, Nick Pope has received an advance of £50,000 for his next book, *The Uninvited* (haven't we heard that title somewhere before? Oh, yes, it was the title of Clive Harold's book about the

1977 Pembrokeshire wave), which is about alien abductions (not many of them at the MoD) and is due for publication next June.

A relative unknown, Nick Redfern (Who he? - Ed.) has received an advance of £40,000 for two books from Simon and Schuster, Pope's publishers. His first title is to be *A Covert Agenda*.



Tim Good: Loadsamoney

These substantial sums pale beside the money being waved at Tim Good. His agent Andrew Lownie (who also acts for Pope and Redfern, obviously a good man to have on your side) moved his client to publishers Century from Macmillan, who had published Good's previous title. The deal was done at the Frankfurt Book Fair eight hours after Century's agent received a synopsis of the forthcoming opus, *Alien Base: Earth's Encounters with Extraterrestrials*, now due next spring. Century paid Good an advance of £200,000, believed to be a record for a UFO-related book.

Pet Obsessions

Several longstanding urban legends and moral panics have re-appeared after short spells out of the limelight.

Most seriously, the promoters of the Satanic ritual abuse scare have started an attempt to rehabilitate themselves, holding a conference at the University of Warwick, attended by social workers from Britain and America, as well as figures such as Margaret Orr. We hope to have more about this in a future issue of *Magonia*. Incidentally, I hope you all saw the excellent BBC TV drama *Flowers of the Forest* based on the Orkney Ritual Abuse case. This gave an insight into the way a scare like this develops and feeds on itself.

The phantom health visitors are back too, with sightings in the north of England. In one case a woman was convincing enough in her role to have the young mother she duped apologising for not taking her daughter to the clinic for a check-up. However, the mother became suspicious when the stranger picked her child up by the scruff of the neck and tried to take her off. In a Merseyside case, reported in *Dead of Night* magazine, issue 10, a woman, conforming to the usual white, middle class stereotype attempted to bluff her way into a Birkenhead house where a young child was living, but this time the mother was alerted by the fact that the baby *had* just been seen by a genuine health worker.

Although papers report the bogus health visitors in terms of abductions and 'paedophile rings', unlike actual paedophile cases which reach the courts, these phantom

visitors seem *never* to succeed in their aim of abduction.

The Observer (3 November 1996) reports from Walthamstow, east London that the pet-nappers are around again. This time they appear to be kidnapping dogs. A man was seen jumping out of a white Ford Transit van (the vehicle of choice amongst petty East-End villains) then "snatch a dog from the street and drive off in broad daylight". Vivisectionists or dog-fight organisers are being blamed. In a curious twist to the story, two separate people were informed by police that dogs which they reported missing had been recovered, and available for collection at the police station. But on arrival, both sets of dog owners were told that a mysterious other person had got there before them and claimed their pet!

Perhaps, to pacify Mrs Buckingham (Letters, *Magonia* 47) and others, we should point out that we report these 'catnapping' cases not out of a sense of cruelty towards cats or mockery of their owners, but to point out the essential absurdity of the reports and hopefully, show that catnapping does not happen. The stories also demonstrate the way in which a particular incident can be built in to any conspiracy theory. The animal warden for Waltham Forest, the borough in which the east London incidents were reported, had also heard the stories, and felt they were valid because he had a period in which he was not picking up any strays. In any other circumstances, of course, a decline in the number of stray dogs on the streets would be treated as good news. ●●●